b:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
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and well beyond the limits of the reciprocal distribution of bridewealth cattle, but I do not wish to exaggerate the extent or effectiveness of economic reciprocity in the kinship system. In the past as well as the present, grain and other food were bartered for cattle, other animal stock, and other commodities, and there was considerable trade, which increased in volume in years of famine. Nowadays, with the introduction of a money economy, grain is bought with cash either from other Nuer or from Arab merchants, who, sponsored by the Government, often import large quantities to meet local shortages.

A stranger cannot intrude himself into a community or build his house and clear his fields without its acceptance. Not only will objections be raised which might lead to his ejection, but he could not hope to gain full membership of the community and the advantages which follow. This does not, however, usually arise because strangers are nearly always a welcome addition to the community, which thereby gains in strength, and because the newcomer can nearly always claim some previous link arising from kinship, marital ties, or at any rate close friendship (*math*), with one or more members of that community. In any case a form of social relationship will be forged in the passage of time by intermarriage and adoption into the lineage structure of the community. A change of residence, if it is permanent, means also a change of social and political affiliation.

For these reasons, because crop production is not an important feature of their economy, at any rate in many parts of Nuerland, and because, despite the obvious limitations of flood-free land, there is no great shortage, there are no complex laws of land tenure. Disputes are rare, and still more rarely taken before the courts.[1] Thus, though circumstances may change with the development of agricultural enterprise, land tenure is not at present an important or well-defined feature of Nuer customary law.

Grazing Rights

During the rains the cattle are kept in the permanent settlements and quartered in cattle-byres (*luak*), each family unit having its own. The *luak* is the centre of the family group consisting of the head of the family and his wives, who, each with her children, occupy separate huts which are clustered around it. Grazing is used communally by all members of the settlement, and although pastures are limited, especially at the height of the rains, and although there may be periodic shortages when the cattle lose condition, no more precise division of the territory is necessary. Disputes rarely, if ever, arise, and in the herding of cattle the members of one settlement are united by common

[1] The only form of dispute commonly brought before the courts concerns 'animal trespass', where straying cattle, sheep, or goats damage the crops of neighbours. Compensation is often awarded in such cases.

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
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4. TRADE AND LOANS

Trade has never been extensive among the Nuer. There is, of course, a division of labour according to sex, but there are few people who can be accounted specialist craftsmen. Individuals acquire the reputation for making certain specific objects with exceptional skill, but they rarely if ever belong to a family especially associated with such activities. This is an exceptional contrast to specialization in the spiritual sphere, for there are hereditary experts capable of dealing with almost any unusual phenomena: ritual experts, magicians, sooth-sayers and medicine-owners, who demand fees, often in cattle, for their services.

The reason lies, perhaps, in the extraordinary simplicity of Nuer material culture. Most things necessary for their migratory way of life (and this applies to all peoples who move with the seasons) can be made either from wood or grass or from the products of their cattle. Seasonal migration in any case precludes a high degree of virtuosity, for things are liable to breakage and are often an unnecessary encumbrance. Moreover the Nuer, who do not use their animals for transport, must carry everything by hand.

Certain objects were of relatively high value, and were exchanged for cattle or sheep and goats. Nowadays, however, most of these articles—hoes, spears, ornaments and the like—can be obtained for cash, and disputes do not often arise in the courts except over the sale of grain.

Trade in Cattle

Trade in cattle is clearly increasing as a cash economy becomes more important to the Nuer but, as yet, cattle are rarely sold except when the purchase of grain is necessary. A significant paragraph from the Jonglei Investigation Team's *Third Interim Report* (1948) is worth quoting, for the figures given, although taken from all Nilotic inhabitants of the Upper Nile Province, include all the Nuer:

> The disposal of surplus livestock is governed by private, family, and tribal circumstances, and is at present tied up with the need to find cash; this is required mainly for the purchase of grain and veterinary vaccines and, to a small extent, for the payment of taxes. There are four channels through which the inhabitants can dispose of their animals:
>
> (*a*) By sale to the Veterinary Laboratory at Malakal, where they will be used to produce cattle-plague vaccine and serum.
>
> (*b*) By sale to Malakal butchers for local consumption.
>
> (*c*) By export to Equatoria Province, in which case most of them will be butchered in Juba.
>
> (*d*) By export northwards to the markets of Kosti and Omdurman.
>
> In the majority of cases all trade is carried out through merchants as intermediaries. . . . Previously it had often been necessary for the District Commissioner concerned to exercise pressure before the local inhabitants could be induced to sell.

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
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Numbers of Cattle sold in or exported from Malakal in Yearly Totals from 1935 to 1947 Inclusive

1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
2,586	2,413	1,590	2,385	2,817	2,116	2,283	3,124	2,204	3,012	5,944	5,380	5,278[1]

When it is remembered that the Nuer alone possess over half a million head of cattle, these sales figures are not impressive, but the increase in sales is significant.

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There is still relatively little internal trade in cattle among the Nuer. Cattle are not bought and sold in local markets, and disputes over prices or payment rarely come before the courts. Cattle continue to be exchanged, however, and there are still customary rates of exchange.

Exchanges and Loans

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The Nuer word for exchange is *gual*, and is used specifically in connexion with the exchange of cattle. '*Ce thak gual ke dou*', 'he exchanged a bull for a cow-calf.' The expression, which is often loosely applied, refers to a direct exchange. In some cases cattle may be exchanged for sheep. It is generally recognized that a large bull or ox is worth a cow-calf, and a cow-calf is worth anything from 10–20 sheep. Such transactions are frequent.[2] In certain situations of spiritual danger—famine, sickness, or death—or in any situation which demands a sacrifice, a sacrificial animal is necessary, and this may not be immediately available. In such circumstances a man will be forced to make an immediate exchange: a cow-calf for a bull-calf, and so on. More

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probably he will borrow a bull or in some cases a ram on the understanding that he will pay the owner its recognized equivalent at some later date. This is in the nature of a loan, and involves some measure of interest. A full-grown ox is worth at least a cow-calf if the debt is discharged at some later date, a ram is worth a bull-calf, and so on. In this case the word *ngual* is usually employed. The word *ngual* implies the passage of time before the transaction is complete, and is thus best translated as 'loan'.

In many cases a Nuer will specify beforehand that he will pay the first cow-calf born to such and such a cow. Such loans are a frequent cause of litigation, for a man is often unwilling to repay the loan after his immediate need has been met, or unable to do so.

[1] Jonglei Investigation Team, *Third Interim Report*, 1948, p. 20.

[2] Among some Nuer and Dinka tribes there is a considerable trade in this manner with Baggara Arabs from the north. Cow-calves are brought in by the latter and exchanged for large oxen, which are then driven north and sold in the markets. This form of trade is, however, limited, for it seems that Baggara cattle will not survive in the areas south of approximately latitude 9°, and though the Nuer have been tempted to try, the experiment has usually been unsuccessful. In any case, there are no statistics available because the practice is not encouraged by the Government owing to the spread of disease.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

262 to part with some of his dura. So want is never far from
437 the door of the Nuer home.

273 A drink—more or less intoxicating, according to the amount one drinks of it—is made from dura. Nuer are very fond of it. They frequently get intoxicated enough to fight when they have had their fill of it.

THE NUER IN BUSINESS

241 Few Nuer men engage in any business that helps others. Practically every Nuer man has a plot of ground where he may raise the family's supply of dura, but he seldom thinks of raising any to sell.

The Government has tried to interest the Nuer in raising cotton, but with no marked success so far.

326 A few men are blacksmiths and make the spears, fishing spears, and ornaments out of iron, brass, or wire. They sharpen old hoes, spears and such like, and make good money in this line. The equipment a blacksmith requires is decidedly meagre. A piece of iron to hammer on, a piece of iron to hammer with, and a fire, constitute the usual equipment, although one occasionally sees a chisel.

342 Some men make a reputation for themselves by their skill as roofers. The roof of a Nuer house when new is a very pretty piece of work, being quite smooth and even. It takes a good roofer to fix a roof so that the heavy tropical rains do not go through it. Men roof the houses, but the making of the long grass eaves to protect the wall from rain is considered as women's work and is left for them to do.

323 Women sometimes make earthen pots and sell or
438 trade them to others who are not so well versed in this art, but practically all women are more or less proficient in pottery.